United Nations S/PRST/2018/3

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 January 2018

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8170th meeting of the Security Council, held on 30 January 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and welcomes the briefing on 11 January 2018 by the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2391 (2017), 2359 (2017), 2364 (2017), 2349 (2017) and 2320 (2016), as well as its presidential statements S/PRST/2017/2 and S/PRST/2017/10.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative and looks forward to ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and good offices, sub-regional and regional cooperation to address root causes and cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, as well as the promotion of good governance, strengthening of institutional capacity, respect for the rule of law and human rights, humanitarian access and assistance, and gender mainstreaming, and further underlines the need for sustained support and adequate resources in this regard. The Security Council further welcomes the efforts to give renewed impetus to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), with a view to ensuring better coordination and efficiency of the international response to the needs of the people and communities of the Sahel region, and *calls upon* donors to mobilize their efforts and align their activities on these key priorities and objectives.

"The Security Council welcomes the positive developments in several West African countries, including continued efforts being made to carry out political, constitutional and security sector reforms to improve governance, consolidate democracy and increase peaceful participation, as well as steps being taken to promote human rights, and encourages national stakeholders, including civil society, to continue to engage in dialogue in a spirit of tolerance and inclusivity.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the timely preparation for, and holding of, peaceful, transparent and credible elections, and urges them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to work towards increased participation of women,

including with a view to increase the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective national, regional and global commitments.

"The Security Council emphasizes the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding as well as in post-conflict situations, as recognized in relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2242 (2015).

"The Security Council welcomes the peaceful general elections held in Liberia on 10 October and the runoff presidential election on 26 December 2017, and expresses appreciation for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Farid Zarif, and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as well as for the efforts of the former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, a member of the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board, SRSG Chambas of UNOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. The members of the Security Council encourages continued engagement of the international community and donors to assist Liberia's continued efforts to achieve sustainable peace, including in support of the commitments made in the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan. The Security Council acknowledges the importance of maintaining international attention on Liberia after the withdrawal of UNMIL in March 2018, on the basis on its resolution 2333 (2016), as well as during the transition period to follow, and stresses the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard.

"The Security Council reiterates its concern over the situation in Guinea-Bissau, calls upon all political leaders to uphold the provisions of the Conakry Accords and to complete its implementation without further delay. The Security Council commends the continued engagement of ECOWAS in helping efforts to resolve the political impasse and expresses its readiness to consider supporting further measures it could take in this regard. The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the organisation of free and fair legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau, in accordance with its constitution.

"The Security Council notes with concern the situation in Togo and welcomes the ongoing regional efforts aimed at assisting national stakeholders to identify a way forward, through dialogue.

"The Security Council expresses its serious concern over the challenging security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, notably threats posed by asymmetric terrorist attacks, maritime piracy and transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, arms, drugs and natural resources, which can be interlinked.

"The Security Council expresses its concerns over the threats of terrorism, including the way terrorists use their narratives to polarize communities, mobilize resources, incite and recruit others to commit terrorist acts in the region, in some cases exploiting transnational organized crime networks. The Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, in particular in the Sahel, notably by JNIM, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Ansarul Islam, and in the Lake Chad Basin region, notably by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and stresses the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council expresses particular concern about attacks on civilians, who are the primary victims of terrorist attacks in the region, and reiterates the primary responsibility of Member States to protect civilians on their territory in accordance with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and urges them to take urgent measures to prevent human rights abuses and violations, including arbitrary arrest and detention, and ensure that persons deprived of liberty are treated in accordance with international law and that those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights are held accountable, to enhance capacity and responsiveness of national human rights mechanisms across the region, to take adequate measures to support and reintegrate Boko Haram abductees, particularly children, and to take measures to increase the number of women in the security sector and national bodies dealing with the crisis.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region and commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States of West Africa and the Sahel, to strengthen border security and regional cooperation, as well as to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), and reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council welcomes ongoing efforts by relevant partners to support, through voluntary contributions, technical assistance and advice, G5 Sahel States' efforts in the establishment and implementation of a robust compliance framework by the G5 Sahel States and FC-G5S to prevent, investigate, address and publicly report violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law related to the FC-G5S. The Security Council further recognizes the important role of UNOWAS in providing technical assistance to the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel, and encourages enhanced cooperation and information sharing.

"The Security Council reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of all instances of trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of forced labour and slavery, in areas affected by armed conflict, which undermine the rule of law, contribute to other forms of transnational organized crime and may exacerbate conflict, insecurity and instability and undermine development. The Security Council reiterates the need to ensure organization and coherence in the efforts of the United Nations System to address trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict or in post-conflict situations, and further recognizes the need to continue to work towards an enhanced, comprehensive and coordinated approach. The Security Council encourages further cooperation between the EU, AU and UN, in particular within the joint Task Force, aimed at saving and protecting lives of migrants and refugees along routes, and in particular inside Libya.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of complementing the security response to the Sahel crisis with a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address root causes of crises, prevent further tensions and violence, tackle exclusion and poverty, strengthen resilience of institutions and communities, promote good governance and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and, in this regard, looks forward to receiving further details on recent

efforts towards recalibrating the UNISS and enhance its implementation through a more integrated, cross-pillar approach across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus. The Security Council further emphasizes the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in sustaining peace and peacebuilding efforts, and, in collaboration with UNOWAS, in mobilizing deeper commitment and partnership between the UN system, the countries of the Sahel and other regional and international partners, including International Financial Institutions.

"The Security Council welcomes efforts of the Governments in the Lake Chad Basin Region and regional and sub-regional organisations to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis, while recognizing the need for enhanced national efforts to address the vast humanitarian needs. The Security Council commends international donors for exceeding the expectations of the Oslo Humanitarian Conference for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February 2017, calls for the disbursement of outstanding funds pledged, and urges all actors to continue their efforts and to ensure close coordination, including between development and humanitarian actors, in particular to enhance protection, early recovery, nutrition and food security, improve living conditions and increase livelihood opportunities.

"The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors.

"The Security Council recognizes the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and welcomes the holding of a first regional stabilization conference in the Lake Chad Basin region, as well as the regional initiative spearheaded by President Buhari of Nigeria to revitalize the ecosystem of the Lake Chad Basin to support sustainable livelihoods, security as well as development in the region.

"The Security Council commends the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for its continuing efforts toward a conclusive demarcation of the border between the two countries, against a backdrop of heightened regional insecurity, and encourages renewed efforts to construct and emplace pillars along the land boundary.

"The Security Council expresses concern over the overall humanitarian situation in the region, characterized by the impact of armed conflict and terrorism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, forced displacement, adverse effects of climate change and epidemics, which contribute to the high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability in the region and continue to affect populations, and call for significant humanitarian and development action.

"The Security Council recalls that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of lives and contribute to instability and security in many regions, including in West Africa and the Sahel, and, in this regard, encourages UNOWAS to consider work that could contribute to countering this threat and calls for sustainable assistance by international and bilateral donors.

"The Security Council encourages further cooperation, mutual prioritization and clear division of tasks between UNOWAS and UNOCA, with

a view to strengthening regional and sub-regional organizations to address cross-border threats, and commends the engagement and assistance of UNOWAS to subregional and regional organizations in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel, including efforts of the ECOWAS Commission to implement its Regional Framework for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance and to promote a coordinated SSR approach in the region.

"The Security Council recognizes the role of UNOWAS in contributing to periodic strategic and integrated analysis of the opportunities, risks and challenges in support of efforts by national and local actors to sustain peace, looks forward to efforts to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the area of conflict prevention, including the development of comprehensive early warning analyses and rapid response mechanisms, and in this regard further welcomes the efforts made to enhance subregional capacities to cooperate on conflict prevention, in particular the joint AU, ECCAS and ECOWAS cooperation on early warning systems.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to periodically monitor progress made, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide information on UNOWAS efforts with respect to aspects highlighted in this statement, and reiterates its call for an assessment of the implementation of its resolution 2349 to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS, paying specific attention to this issue in the upcoming regular report due in July 2018."